



**COUNTY OF DUTCHESS**  
BOARD OF HEALTH

**DUTCHESS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, August 18, 2022**

The regular monthly meeting of the Dutchess County Board of Health was held virtually on Microsoft Teams and at the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH), 85 Civic Center Plaza – Suite 106, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 on the above date.

**PRESENT:** Alexander Cohen, MD                      John Fallon, NP  
Doug McHoul, Legislative Rep.              David McNary, Vice President  
Marc Nelson, MPA, Secretary

**ABSENT:** Laura Fil, DO  
Lobsang T. Lungay, MD, President  
Maria Muller, RN  
Melissa Nelson-Perron, MD

**VISITORS:** Andrew Sherman Evans, Jr., MPH, DC DBCH  
Director of Public Health & Disease Prevention  
Crystal Galloway, DC DBCH Principal Program Assistant  
Ronald Hicks, Assistant County Executive  
Anthony Ruggiero, MPA, DC DBCH Assistant Commissioner of Administration  
Livia Santiago-Rosado, MD, FACEP, DC DBCH Commissioner  
Debbie Thomas, MHA, DC DBCH  
Director of Performance Management & Data Analytics

**CALL TO ORDER** – Mr. McNary called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS** - New Board of Health member Alexander Cohen, MD, was given the oath of office and welcomed.

**DECLARATION OF A QUORUM** – A quorum was called.

**MINUTES** – The minutes of the June 16, 2022, meeting were reviewed. Mr. McHoul made a motion to approve the June minutes, Mr. Nelson seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**SECRETARY'S UPDATE** – No correspondence

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT** – Covid continues to circulate around the county, and we are currently at a Medium Covid Level. Hospitalizations and deaths have remained low but in keeping with the Omicron variant, the BA 4/5 is rapidly transmissible but not a lot of severe illness. We currently have 8 cases of Monkeypox in Dutchess County with a few lab results still pending. The rise of these cases is relatively slow due to the requirement of skin-to-skin contact for transmission and the incubation period is longer than with Covid. We were able to advocate with NYS Department of Health for vaccine for pre-exposure prophylaxis. There will be an eligibility criteria and individuals can sign-up online to see if they are eligible and would like the vaccine. We will be holding some limited vaccination events and continue to follow the data coming from the city, state, and country.

We have our first series of PHIL (Public Health Innovation Lab) students starting, we currently have 6 students and there are still a few applications to review so we may have up to 8 students. We will be following the students closely as they move through their track during the semester long program. We are also forming a Social Determinant Network recognizing there are a lot of things that impact health and there is not a good systems base to interact with resources. Our hope is to align the efforts of all organizations. Currently we have a core group of stakeholders from community organizations and government departments meeting to give shape to the network. We are looking at a platform to use for connecting and closing the loop, so people don't fall through the cracks.

We are reaching out to partner with the local school districts on Health class in school for the 22/23 school year. We are starting with BOCES and looking to gather what is being taught in school and then work on recreating from the ground-up, almost a mini-med school for kids so they are better equipped to act on an emergency and prepare for a healthier life while impacting the health literacy of the community. Fortunately, we are already connected with school superintendent's due to our Covid forums. So far, the districts all seem to be on board, and we would hope to have a pilot program ready for the 2023/24 school year. We will also do our best to reach out to the private schools to bring them on board. Mr. McNary asked if we were also reaching out to the Colleges? Dr. Santiago stated that we do meet with the colleges, most recently regarding monkeypox, but we are looking to start with the K-12 schools first regarding health literacy. Mr. McNary stated that maybe there are some program areas at the colleges that could assist with this new program.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**HEALTH DISPARITIES** – No report

**SANITARY CODE** – No report

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT** – Tonight there is a committee meeting that will be looking at adding a Social Worker position at Mid-Hudson Regional for the Behavioral Center for Excellence. This is to fill some gaps and make sure that patients with increased risk make it to their follow-up appointment after being discharged from the hospital. The legislature will also be accepting

1.95 million of the Opioid Settlement Funds for a long-term treatment center with St. Joe's and training for the staff. The Opioid Settlement money will continue over the next few years. Mr. McNary inquired if the Stabilization Center is involved as it would be an amazing advantage to have people referred right from the Center to St. Joe's treatment center. Mr. McHoul stated that 1.5 million for the center, \$300,000 for law enforcement training, and the balance for the Empowerment Center. Mr. McNary also inquired if there was a mechanism to track success and benefits so that we can preserve the program if its successful? Dr. Santiago introduced Debbie Thomas, MHA, the department's new Director of Performance Management and Data Analytics, who is tasked with asking those questions of all the programs and services offered by the department. With our limited resources, Ms. Thomas will be tasked with evaluating programs to maximize impact and to what extent we are improving the lives and health of the county. This is a work in progress as it is a new division to the department. Mr. Hicks added that Westchester Medical Center was looking to move forward with a 1.5 million REDC grant through the NYS Governor's office which changed its focus. The County Executive picked it up and expanded it to 3 million and to 60 beds which is a critical need in the county. They are also looking at expanding even further to include children's behavioral health beds.

## **NEW/OLD BUSINESS**

**COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS** – Mr. McNary reported on the recently released County Health Rankings. Areas that have gotten worse include Poor Mental Health Days, Low birthweight, Adult Obesity, Physical Inactivity, Excessive Drinking, Sexually Transmitted Infections, number of mental health providers per population but we have improved on the ratio of primary care physicians per population, access to exercise opportunities, and alcohol impaired driving deaths. This is a snapshot and tool to look for best practices. Dr. Santiago mentioned that on September 14, from 8:30 – 12:30 pm, at the Henry Wallace Center at FDR Home, we will be presenting our results from the latest CHA. The invitation will be shared with the Board and they are encouraged to attend.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS** – Mr. McNary presented resolutions last month of which one was regarding climate change and how it impacts health care. He feels that the concept should be part of the discussion of the Board moving forward. Mr. Nelson agreed and invited the DBCH team to discuss in the future what we are doing currently regarding climate change.

The second resolution was to invite key representatives of different medical and health organizations to meet periodically with the Board to hold conversations regarding plans, strategies and initiatives related to enhancing the health status of the county. Ms. Galloway asked how the Board of Health meetings are being advertised as she had never heard of them before. A press release is completed 10 -14 days prior to the meeting date and shared with the County Executive's Communication list which consists of local publications and media outlets. Dr. Santiago stated Ildiko Rabinowitz, from Nuvance's Community Health Needs Committee might be willing to come and speak with the Board. An invitation should be sent from the Board of Health for the October meeting.

The third resolution was for the Board of Health to receive a \$100,000 budget within the Department of Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH) budget and a prorated amount be given for the 2022 year. It was suggested at the June meeting that the Board of Health come up with a proposal for \$10,000, that could be submitted with the DBCH budget. Mr. Nelson stated that they would like to use their \$10,000-\$15,000 for education and community outreach. Mr. Nelson also stated that he feels that for the board to feel like an engaged board they need to have a budget. Throughout the pandemic the board members have felt a sense of helplessness and by getting a line item they will feel they can do some things. Mr. Ruggiero stated that he would just need a little more detail on the education and community outreach as he will have to justify it to the budget office. He also stated he wasn't sure if we could still get anything added for the 2023 budget. Dr. Santiago suggested that whatever the Board would like to do should be designed more specifically so that as long as it is successful, it can continue in the budget for years to come and build on for the future. Mr. Hicks stated that the County has a budget office that reviews every request made from every department. He reached out, there is still time to add something to the 2023 budget, but it needs to be justified. DBCH staff will need a plan with details to be able to justify the line item.

**VACCINE PRICE INCREASE:** Karl Schlegel, Director of Fiscal Services, has submitted a request to increase the polio vaccine by \$10 due to a price increase in purchasing the vaccine. Mr. McHoul made a motion to approve the price increase, Mr. Fallon seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**LCHSA ANNUAL REPORT:** Ms. Wright gave the Annual Report for the Licensed Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA) which is required by NYS Department of Health, Article 36 Public Health Law. In 2021 the program received 310 referrals, 138 admissions, 208 unduplicated patient count, 145 visits, and 95 discharges. Compared to 2020, we had a significant decrease in referrals and looking deeper it seems to be from Vassar Brothers Hospital. The thought is that in 2020 they may have automatically referred all patients and in 2021 have gone back to referring those who need the skilled services. The patients that are seen typically high-risk referrals, including domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health. Some of the children we see in the LHCSA program are exposed to Lead and those numbers aren't all that different from 2020. All children ages 1 & 2 years of age are required to be tested for lead exposure regardless of their risk factors. City of Poughkeepsie has the concentration of lead cases with Beacon following in second but there are cases throughout the county. Article 36 requires us to hold an advisory committee meet 4 times a year which were held in 2021. We also have a Utilization Review committee that reviews a certain percentage of charts, in 2021 that was 17 charts. These charts are reviewed and the strengths that were identified were Medication Management, Education and Teaching, and Linkage to Services. Some recommendations made were consents being obtained at the start of the care visit, including prematurity and other pertinent medical diagnosis on the Plan of Care, clarify documentation of diet on children with elevated blood lead levels and include all medications. All statistical reports were filed including the flu report which is that all the staff have had their flu vaccine. We reviewed policies, employee health requirements, staff safety, and precautions for home visiting. There was a big change in the TB screening and testing for employees, only test when an employee is new and again if the screening requires it. Many staff were redeployed to work

Covid vaccine pods. Challenges in 2021 were recruitment, staffing and integrating electronic and paper documentation when working remotely. We have since hired new staff. Mr. McNary asked what the biggest challenge facing the program for the next year? Staffing was one of the biggest challenges we previously had and now our ability to connect with our most underserved population has become more challenging, maybe due to less trust because we are a government agency.

Mr. Nelson asked for clarification of the Utilization Review. Ms. Wright stated it is a committee that reviews a sample set of patient records to see if the care is appropriate, if there were issues with how the care was provided and documented, then makes recommendations for change. Mr. Nelson asked if the records are reviewed with the patient information redacted? Ms. Wright stated that the patient signs a release and the individuals participating in the utilization review are DBCH staff and there are attestations that are signed by the participants on confidentiality. Mr. Nelson then asked if there is informed consent of the patient to have their record reviewed as part of the Utilization Review? Ms. Wright stated she didn't know if there was an additional consent that the patient signs for this process. Dr. Cohen stated that typically utilization review is covered under the operations exception for the HIPPA privacy law. It was recommended that the utilization review process be reviewed to remove participants who are not Department of Behavioral & Community Health or redact personal information. Mr. Nelson asked who members of the Professional Advisory Committee are, how many are there and who chooses them. Ms. Wright stated we currently have 8 members, both internal and external, but the external members are important to make sure we are doing what we are supposed to do. Mr. Nelson then asked about inviting members who are there to review your policies & procedures when there are no term limits, no names, no credentials, and more information on the PAC Committee would be beneficial to your next report. Ms. Wright took that under advisement for her next report.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** Mr. Nelson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. McNary seconded, all were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: Thursday, September 15, 2022**

**2022 EXECUTIVE POSITIONS FOR THE BOARD OF HEALTH**

Dr. Lobsang T. Lungay – President  
David McNary – Vice President  
Marc Nelson – Secretary

Minutes signed by:



Marc Nelson  
Secretary of the Board of Health



Wendy Cady  
Recording Secretary